

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **A-6**NEW YORK TIMES
17 February 1984

Democrats to Press Bills Against Secrecy Measures

By **STUART TAYLOR Jr.**

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16 — Despite a White House effort to ease the dispute, Congressional Democrats said today that they would press their challenge to President Reagan's policy of using censorship and polygraph, or lie-detector, tests to guard national security secrets.

In addition, a spokesman for Senator Charles McC. Mathias Jr., Republican of Maryland, said Mr. Mathias wanted some further definitive action to "give a decent burial" to the censorship policy. The spokesman said the Senator planned to proceed with a hearing on

the issue set for Feb. 23.

Democratic opponents of Mr. Reagan's secrecy measures welcomed a statement Wednesday by Larry Speakes, Mr. Reagan's chief spokesman, that the President had decided "not to implement" for the time being those aspects of an order on March 11, 1983, requiring vastly expanded use of censorship and polygraph testing of officials who handle certain intelligence secrets.

But the Democratic critics of the proposed secrecy measures stressed that Mr. Reagan had not committed himself to dropping the measures permanently. Some of the Democrats said they would go ahead with efforts to seek permanent legislation to block the Administration's continuing use of such measures and preventing Mr. Reagan from extending them.

Eagleton Questions Sincerity

"I question both the motives and the sincerity" behind Mr. Speakes's statement, said Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, a Missouri Democrat who co-sponsored temporary legislation last year blocking the increased use of censorship agreements until April 15.

He said the President's motive was "to curtail a tidal wave of bad press until after the election" and to remove a controversial issue from the Senate hearings on the nomination of the White House counselor, Edwin Meese 3d, who helped draft Mr. Reagan's secrecy policies, to be Attorney General.

Mr. Mathias was the other sponsor of the temporary legislation blocking Mr. Reagan's efforts to require more than 100,000 officials who handle sensitive intelligence secrets to sign lifelong censorship agreements. He could not be reached today, his aides said.

A Tentative Move

Representative Jack Brooks, a Texas Democrat who is sponsoring a bill to impose tight, permanent restrictions on Government use of censorship and polygraphs, said Mr. Speakes's

statement signaled "only a tentative half-step."

"Much of the Administration's polygraph and censorship scheme may still go forward," Mr. Brooks said. Under the approach announced by Mr. Speakes, he said, "each agency is free to enact their own version of the President's censorship and polygraph policies quietly in the shadows, agency by agency."

Brooks Pushes Legislation

Mr. Brooks noted that without new legislation the Defense Department apparently would be free after April 15 to proceed with its own plans to use polygraphs extensively "in employment interviews and for random security checks under the threat of adverse consequences," notwithstanding Mr. Speakes' statement. Mr. Brooks said enactment of his bill was necessary to prevent such measures.

Representative Patricia Schroeder, Democrat of Colorado, agreed, saying she planned to proceed with hearings on Mr. Brooks's bill before her subcommittee. She said that "random use of polygraphs and lifetime prepublication review restrictions have no place in a free society."

A White House official said today that Mr. Reagan had not yet signed any formal order suspending implementation of the censorship and polygraph provisions in the March 11, 1983, secrecy order, entitled "National Security Decision Directive 84."

The official added, "He intends to do so."

STAT